

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2771

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USINT CAIRO

S E C R E T SANAA 1899

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS CINCEUR FOR POLAD AND SECDEF FOR ISA

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, YE, YS, SA

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH CHIEF OF STAFF MASWARI; SAG FINANCING
LARGE EGYPTIAN ARMS DELIVERY TO YAR

1. SUMMARY. YARG WILL RECEIVE MAJOR SHIPMENT OF SAG-FINANCED ARMS (TANKS, AIRCRAFT, ET.AL.) FROM EGYPT IN COMING MONTH. MASWARI TOLD BY PRINCE SULTAN THAT SAG ENCOURAGES HELP FROM OTHER FRIENDLY AREA STATES TO YEMEN. VISIT TO IRAN BY PRES. IRYANI MAY TAKE PLACE SOON. I BRIEFED MASWARI ON STATUS LONG-TERM MILITARY PROGRAM DRAWN UP WITH SAG. HE AGREED PROGRAM SHOULD BE SCALED DOWN REALISTICALLY IN ORDER NOT TO OBSTRUCT YEMEN'S DEVELOPMENT. WE BELIEVE THIS NEW HELP FROM EGYPT TO OUR ADVANTAGE AS WELL AS YEMEN'S. END SUMMARY.

2. CHIEF OF STAFF COLONEL HUSAIN AL-MASWARI CALLED ON ME SEPT. 23 AT HIS REQUEST. PURPOSE WAS TO BRIEF ME ON OUTCOME HIS TALKS WITH SAG MODA PRINCE SULTAN AND OTHER OFFICIALS DURING
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TWO DAY VISIT TO JIDDA SEPT 18-19.

3. MASWARI SAID HE EXTREMELY PLEASED WITH OUTCOME OF TALKS HE HAD HELD WITH SULTAN AND REPRESENTATIVE FROM EGYPTIAN PRESIDENCY, BRIGADIER ABD AL-RA'UF (REPRESENTING PRES. SADAT). MAJOR RESULT WAS SIGNED AGREEMENT FOR SAG-FINANCED DELIVERY OF EMERGENCY ARMS FROM EGYPT. ACCORDING MASWARI, YAR WILL RECEIVE FULL PACKAGE VALUED AT 34 MILLION STERLING BY END OF OCTOBER. MAJOR ITEMS INCLUDE TWENTY 5-34 TANKS, SIXTEEN T-54 TANKS, EIGHTEEN MIG-17 FIGHTERS, AND SIXTEEN SU-7 FIGHTER-BOMBERS PLUS RADAR SETS, ARTILLERY, MACHINE GUNS, AND RELATED AMMUNITION. MASWARI TELLS US YARAF HAS SUFFICIENT PILOTS TO MAN MIG-17'S, BUT AS PART OF PACKAGE, WILL SEND OTHER PILOTS TO EGYPT FOR CONVERSION TO SU-7'S. ALTHOUGH NO US-ORIGIN EQUIPMENT INVOLVED, MASWARI SAID USG DESERVES MUCH OF CREDIT FOR THIS PACKAGE, SINCE IT WAS USG URGING TO SAG TO HELP IN DEFENSE OF YAR THAT HAD STIMULATED THIS ARRANGEMENT.

4. MASWARI EXPANDED ON WARNING PRESIDENT SADAT HAD REPORTEDLY GIVEN PDRY PRESIDENT ALI IN PRESENCE YAR PRESIDENT IRYANI DURING ALGIERS CONFERENCE (SANAA 1892) TO EFFECT THAT EGYPT WOULD DEFEND YAR AGAINST ANY PDRY THREAT. ACCORDING MASWARI, SADAT SPECIFICALLY INFORMED ALI HE WAS SENDING TANKS AND AIRCRAFT TO YAR TO MATCH SOVIET ARMS FLOWING INTO ADEN. MASWARI AGREED WITH MY PERSONAL OBSERVATION THAT ONE FACTOR STIMULATING SADAT WAS HIS FEELING PDRY CONSPIRING WITH RUSSIONS AGAINST HIM.

5. MASWARI WAS PARTICULARLY GRATIFIED BY SULTAN'S STATEMENT THAT SAG ENCOURAGED YARG TO TAKE LEAD IN SEEKING HELP FROM OTHER FRIENDLY AREA STAOES. SULTAN MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY ETHIOPIA, EGYPT, JORDAN, IRAN, KUWAIT, AND ABU DHABI. SAG WOULD SUPPORT THESE EFFORTS. MASWARI AND SULTAN AGREED SUCH STEPS SHOULD BE PRIMARILY THROUGH PRESIDENT IRYANI.

6. MASWARI SAID THAT DURING EARLIER VISIT TO JIDDA HE HAD CALLED ON IRANIAN AMBASSADOR RA'ID AND, AFTER COORDINATING WITH SAG, HAD SUGGESTED THAT MOST USEFUL STEP IRAN COULD MAKE WOULD BE INVITATION FROM SHAH TO IRYANI TO VISIT IRAN. THIS TIME MASWARI HAD SEEN RA'ID AGAIN AND WAS TOLD IIG REACTION POSITIVE AND TIMING NOW UNDER STUDY.

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7. I CONGRATULATED MASWARI ON HIS EFFECTIVE DIPLOMACY. IT WAS OBVIOUS YARG, SAG, AND WE ALL ON SAME PATH. OUR GOALS IN YEMEN WERE TO HELP COUNTRY DEVELOP ECONOMICALLY AND TO ENCOURAGE SUPPORT FOR ITS DEFENSE. THIS BROUGHT ME TO SUBJECT OF LONG-TERM PLAN WE DISCUSSING WITH SAG FOR RE-EQUIPPING AND TRAINING YAR ARMED FORCES ALONG WESTERN LINES. FOLLOWING GENERAL QABBANI'S VISIT, WE HAD WORKED WITH SAUDIS TO HELP THEM DRAW UP OVERALL PLAN WHICH HAD NOW GONE TO WASHINGTON. FRANKLY,

THERE WAS FEELING PLAN TOO AMBITIOUS AND ELABORATE AND VERY EXPENSIVE. I FEARED BURDEN OF SO MUCH EQUIPMENT WOULD SINK YAR, WHOSE FIRST CONCERN HAD TO BE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. WE HOPED SHORTLY TO HAVE IDEA OF WHAT ROLE JORDAN MIGHT PLAY IN OVERALL PROGRAM. WE COULD THEN SEE BETTER WHAT SAG MIGHT BEST DO TO IMPLEMENT REALISTIC BUT COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM SCALED TO YEMEN'S NEEDS AND CAPABILITIES. I CAUTIONED THAT WE HAD NOT YET DISCUSSED ANY REVISED THINKING WITH SAG.

8. MASWARI RESPONDED THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED MATTER WITH SULTAN WHO HAD TOLD HIM SAG AND USG HAVE LONG-TERM PROGRAM UNDER CONSIDERATION (SULTAN MENTIONED TO HIM FIGURE OF BILLION DOLLARS). HE STRESSED THAT SHORT-TERM EMERGENCY AID FROM EGYPT IN NO WAY ALTERED YARG DETERMINATION TO RE-ORIENT ITS ARMED FORCES ALONG WESTERN LINES. SHIPMENT FROM EGYPT STRICTLY AN INTERIM MEASURE. HE AGREED YAR SHOULD NOT OVER-BURDEN ITSELF WITH LARGE AND EXPENSIVE ARMS INVENTORY COST OF MAINTAINING WHICH COULD DEFLECT YAR FROM PRIMARY TASK OF DEVELOPEMTN.

9. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH SAG-GOE-YARG TRIANGULAR ARMS ARRANGEMENT WILL PROVIDE MORE SOVIET-ORIGIN EQUIPMENT TO YEMEN, BELIEVE THIS NOT BAD THING FROM USG VIEWPOINT. FIRST IT BRINGS ANOTHER PLAYER (EGYPT) INTO GAME ALONGSIDE YAR AND FURTHER ISOLATES PDRY. SECONDLY, IT WILL HELP NEGATE SOMEWHAT YARG'S REAL FEELING OF MILITARY HELPLESSNESS IN FACE PDRY (PARTICULARLY

LACK OF ARMOR AND AIRCRAFT). THIRDLY, IF PAST HISTORY A GUIDE, OPERATIONAL LIFE OF EQUIPMENT LIKELY TO BE RATHER SHORT GIVEN PROBLEMS OF MAINTENANCE. FINALLY, IT NEGATES SOVIET POLICY OF LEAVING YARG TWISTING SLOWLY IN WIND BY SHUTTING PIPELINE TO SOVIET-EQUIPPED YAR ARMED FORCES WHILE BUILDING UP PDRY FORCES. CRAWFORD

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